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ABSTRACT

The objective of the University of British Columbia's Native Indian Teacher Education Program (NITEP) is to increase the number of native Indian certified teachers by developing an alternative program of teacher education more appropriate to Indians' cultural heritage and educational background. Open only to students of Indian ancestry, NITEP began in 1974. Although standards and most courses are similar, NITEP differs from the regular teacher education program in that student teaching in Indian communities (after basic education practice courses) precedes theoretical coursework, two Indian Studies courses are included in the curriculum, and students attend one of six off-campus centres for their first two years in the program. Off-campus instruction is provided by visiting teachers from the main campus and in some cases by local instructors. NITEP students transfer to the main campus for the third year, a minimum requirement for teacher certification, and the fourth year, leading to a bachelor's degree as well as certification. Support services (counseling, financial support, and advice) are important to the program. The "Indianness" of NITEP has been furthered by its Indian-related content and by influence from points of Indian power (Advisory Committee, supervisor, staff, students, communities with off-campus centres) within NITEP. (SB)

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The Structure of
The Native Indian Teacher Education Program
And
"Indianness"

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Paper presented to the Symposium
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Introduction

The Native Indian Teacher Education Program at the University of British Columbia is but one of twenty different programs throughout Canada. All of these programs relate back, in one way or the other, to the Education Policy Statement of the National Indian Brotherhood,

"Our aim is to make education relevant to the philosophy and needs of Indian people. We want education to give our children a strong sense of identity with confidence in their personal worth and ability. We believe in education:

- as a preparation for total living
- as a means of free choice of where to live and work
- as a means of enabling us to participate in our own social, economic, political and educational advancements" (Indian Control of Indian Education, 1974, p. 3).

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and,

"Native teachers and counsellors who have an intimate understanding of Indian traditions, psychology, way of life and language, are best able to create the learning environment suited to the habits and interests of the Indian child" (ibid, p. 18).

The overall objective of NITEP, stated in the original proposal, is to, "increase the number of native Indian teachers certified to teach in British Columbia schools (both federal and provincial) by developing an alternative program which is more appropriate to the educational background, heritage, needs and desires of people of Indian ancestry in this province."

The purpose of this paper is to describe the Native Indian Teacher Education Program, with an emphasis upon the way in which it attempts to reflect the goals and the cultural milieu of native Indian people in British Columbia.

This paper is divided into two sections. The first section describes the Program. The second section deals specifically with the issues related to Indianness.

Description of NITEP

The Native Indian Teacher Education Program is a four year program leading to the Bachelor of Education degree and professional teacher certification in British Columbia. Students may leave the Program with the minimum teacher certification after completing three years of study, but they are encouraged to continue through to the degree. Students are admitted to the program through regular University admission or the mature

student admission category of the University. The program is available only to people of Indian ancestry.

Most of the course work taken by the students is very similar to that taken by students in the regular teacher education program. None of the differences result in a "watering down" of the standards or expectations of the students. It is important to emphasize and re-emphasize that although entrance standards are very flexible, the completion standards are equal to (but we believe more appropriate than) the standards of the regular teacher education programs.

One of the major ways in which the Program differs is in the location of the first two years of study. Students attend classes for the first two years at an off-campus centre. Since the Program began in 1974 it has been located in six different communities for varying lengths of time. The Program will open a new centre in a seventh community in September. The purpose of locating the first two years of study away from campus is to permit the students to complete their studies much closer to home, allowing them to maintain a closer contact with their own people. The off-campus location also eases the transition for those students who come from smaller communities.

Another significant way in which the Program differs is by a reversal in the order of course work. Most Canadian teacher education programs provide the academic and theoretical courses in the first two years, leaving the practical courses and student teaching to the final year(s). NITEP students take their basic education practice courses and student teaching (12 weeks per year) in the first two years. The purpose of this early and extended

exposure to the education courses and student teaching is to provide real classroom experiences to which to attach their academic and theoretical course work. It also provides for concurrent exposure to student teaching and basic education courses. The classroom emphasis provides NITEP students with various effective models of teaching early in their teacher education. This early involvement in the classroom is not only an effective way of preparing native Indian teachers but is possibly a more effective approach to the education of any teacher.

The Indian Studies courses are the only courses in NITEP which are unique to the Program. The Indian Studies courses are presently "half courses" and one is taken in each of the first two years. The objectives of the Indian Studies courses are to improve the students' understanding of contemporary issues in Indian matters, to critically analyze these issues with particular emphasis on Indian viewpoints, and to learn to evaluate and adapt Indian education resources. The first course, Introduction to Indian Studies, deals with selected issues affecting B.C. Indians, particularly historical antecedents and Indian viewpoints. The course makes considerable use of native Indian resource people, and is now taught by a native Indian educator. The second course, Issues in Indian Education, deals with selected issues in Indian education, particularly the relation of these issues to the past and Indian viewpoints. The course also develops skills in evaluation and adaptation of teaching resources related to native Indians. As in the first course, considerable use is made of native Indian resource people and

the course is currently taught by a native Indian educator.

The remaining courses in the program, although officially identical to regular on-campus courses, usually undergo a very effective metamorphisis because of the off-campus centres, the early emphasis on student teaching, and the fact that the students are native Indian. Some courses undergo only minor changes in which the instructor spontaneously makes changes in examples and assignments. Some courses undergo major changes, in which the instructor utilizes considerable reference to Indian content and situations.

An extremely important component of NITEP is the support services. These support services assist students to overcome academic and social gaps which may exist at entry to the Program, and achieve regular graduation standards. The support services in all years of the Program include counselling services, financial support and advice.

Each of the off-campus Centres is under the direction of a Coordinator who provides the counselling, student teaching placements, student teaching seminars, administration of the Centre, coordination of itinerant instructors and arrangements for local resource people.

Instruction is provided mainly by instructors from the University who visit the off-campus Centre for a period of one to five days. In some cases instructors are drawn from the local area.

In the third and fourth year the students come on to campus to complete their advanced academic work, their education majors and their final student teaching. While little is said in this paper of the transition from the

off-campus Centre to the University, the transition is a very crucial point in the education of the student teachers and a considerable amount of effort goes in to making that transition as smooth and effective as possible.

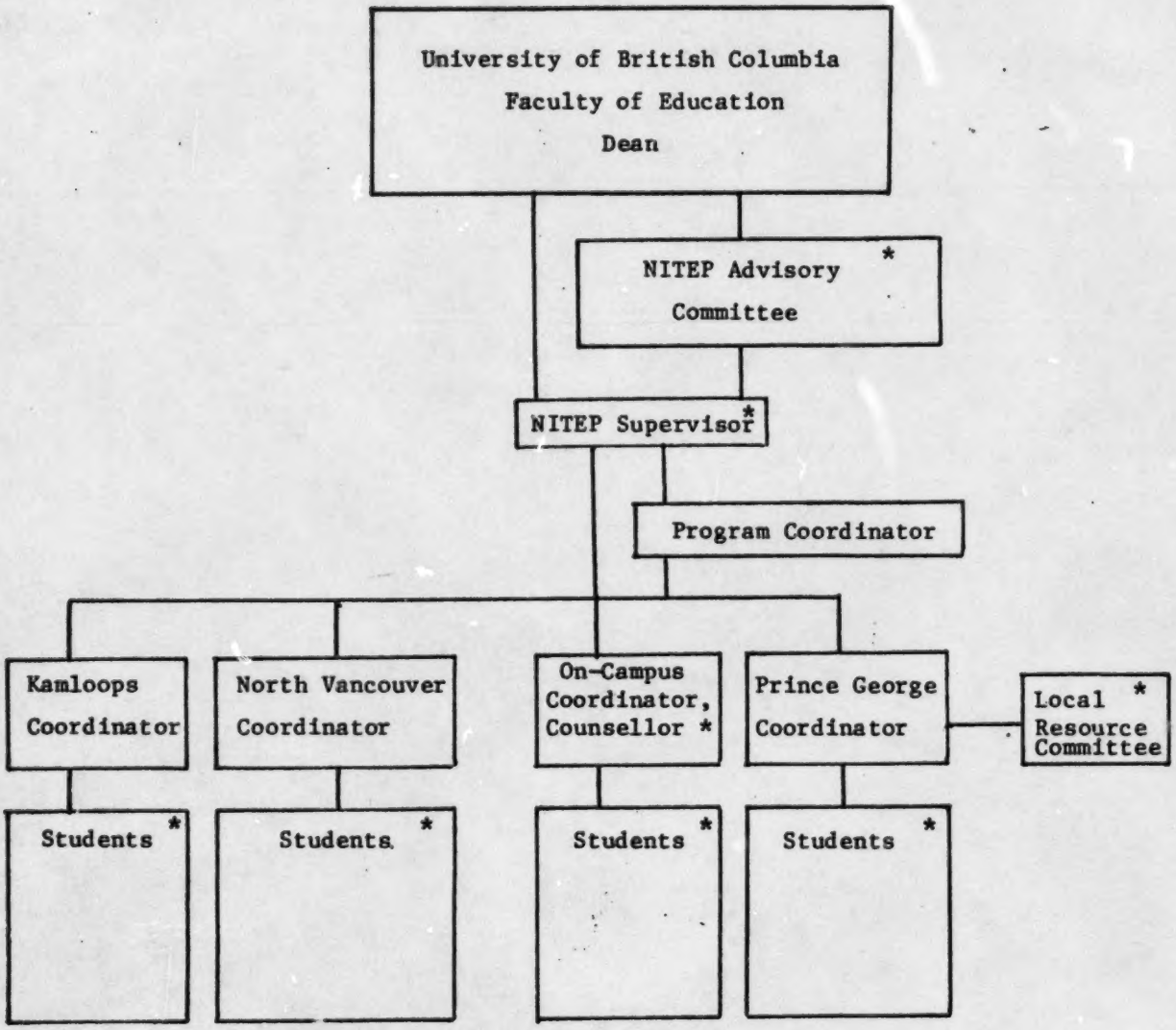
NITEP was initiated by a group of native Indian educators who started initial discussions in 1969. It took the group some five years to realize the establishment of the Program because of resistance from government agencies and the University. In its final stages the Program was developed by a group of eight educators, five of whom were native Indians and three of whom were non-Indian faculty members at the University of B.C. That original planning committee has now evolved into the NITEP Advisory Committee which is a Dean's Committee. The present membership of the Committee is 17, eleven of whom are native Indians and six non-Indians. The Advisory Committee is responsible for all policy, personnel and major decisions. Although the Advisory Committee decisions are legally only recommendations to the Dean, over the past seven years the Dean and the University enacted virtually all of the Committee's decisions.

Figure 1 is a model of the hierarchical structure of NITEP and figure 2 is a model representing the structure of NITEP for 1981/82. These models are intended to summarize the Program description.

Indianness

Much has been said and written about the Indianness of the various native Indian teacher education programs in Canada. In many ways the differences between these programs and regular programs focus around the Indianness of these programs. In a recent review of the programs across

Figure 1: Organizational Model for 1981/82:
Native Indian Teacher Education Program



* Indian input formalized at this point.

Figure 2: Program Model for 1981/82:
Native Indian Teacher Education Program

OFF-CAMPUS

Year 1 - Coursework

English	20%
Indian Studies	20%
Education Theory	20%
Education Practice	40%

- Student Teaching: 8 weeks in-term, 4 weeks post-term

Year 2 - Coursework

English	20%
Indian Studies	20%
Education Theory	20%
Education Practice	40%

- Student Teaching: 8 weeks in-term, 4 weeks post-term

ON-CAMPUS

Year 3 - Coursework [1]

Academic	27%
Education Theory	27%
Education Practice	27%
Indian Studies	20%

- Student Teaching: 3 weeks post-term

Year 4 - Coursework [1]

Academic	27%
Education Theory	27%
Education Practice	27%
Indian Studies	20%

- Student Teaching: 3 weeks post-term

[1] Percentages for academic, education theory, education practice vary according to individual programs.

Canada, one of the authors found that the Indianness of the programs was both a major factor in the effectiveness of the programs and a major factor in the problems which the programs face. (More, 1980, p. 8).

NITEP is no exception to this phenomenon. An extensive external review of NITEP found that students were "...gaining greater insight into traditional Indian life, and the values which should be preserved, ... gaining a clearer sense of their roots as native people, ... and that other NITEP students are the greatest source of help when I run into difficulty." (Thomas and McIntosh, 1977, pp. 31 and 58.) They also found that the students were not satisfied with the Indian Studies courses as they were offered at that time, and students felt that native communities were not adequately represented on the Advisory Committee (ibid, pp. 63 and 87).

But what is meant by this notion of Indianness? Despite the frequency with which the term arises, there does not appear to be a general consensus of its meaning. To some non-Indians it is a romantic notion of the traditions of the past. To some Indianness is the degree to which the student teachers <u>feel</u> the Program is Indian. To others, including the authors, Indianness is a realistic reflection of the way of life, the values, and the goals of contemporary Indian people.

In this section we describe the Indianness of the Program from two perspectives. The first perspective is based on the power, defined as the ability to significantly effect decisions, of Indian people in the Program. The second perspective is based on Program contents and the manner to which they (a) reflect the cultural milieu from which the NITEP students come,

(b) reflect the cultural milieu in which they will teach, and (c) develops the skills and understanding necessary for achieving the educational goals of Indian people.

a. Power

Figure 1 indicates the points at which Indian people have formalized power.

The greatest Indian influence on the Program, in terms of power, is on the NITEP Advisory Committee. The Committee membership, including student representatives, is 65% native Indian and the Chair is native Indian. The Committee is responsible for all major Program and Personnel decisions. Only day-to-day decisions are not referred to the Committee. The Committee's degree of influence has varied over the years. In the first year the Advisory Committee was involved in virtually every decision of the Program. Then as the number of significant decisions to be made decreased, and as the Committee became less and less knowledgeable about the day-to-day workings of the Program, the Committee's influence decreased. During the last 2 years there was concern expressed by Advisory Committee members about their decreased involvement in decision-making, and their lack of knowledge of the inner workings of NITEP. As a result a Workshop was held last autumn. It was attended by Advisory Committee members, Staff, some instructors, and student representatives. One of the major results of that Workshop was a tremendous increase in Advisory communication with the rest of the Program and an increased involvement in decision making.

Another "power" point is at the level of NITEP Supervisor. The first

two Supervisors (More and Cook) are non-Indians. But it has been the goal of the Program since its inception, to have a native Indian as Supervisor (and not as a token appointment). There were native Indians qualified for the position when the Program began. But they were all committed to their home communities or positions of more influence than NITEP Supervisor. Furthermore there was resistance from the University to appointing a person who did not possess the doctorate, even if that person possessed all the necessary skills and experience. This was a very real problem because there are so few native Indian doctorates in Canada.

After a year of formal search, and almost a year of waiting for the selected candidate who was unable for personal reasons to begin in 1980, the Program now has a native Indian as Supervisor.

Another NITEP staff member is native Indian. She is also NITEP's first graduate. Two native Indian people have been staff members in the past.

The problem of finding and attracting native Indians to the Program and the University setting has been serious for NITEP. It would appear to be a serious problem for other Canadian programs too.

The community in which the off-campus Centre is located, is another Indian "power" point. Off-campus Centres have maintained an informal communication with the local Indian community and this has been a valuable resource to the Centres. The new Prince George Centre has formalized this relationship by establishing a "Local Resource Committee" made up primarily of Indian people from the area surrounding Prince George. The Committee acts as a resource and advisor to the Prince George Coordinator.

One of the most effective Indian "power" points is the NITEP students. Their input into decision-making is formalized through representation on the Advisory Committee. Their input is less formal but equally effective in their communication with Centre Coordinator and the NITEP Supervisor.

b. Program

The Indianness of NITEP can be assessed by the degree to which the program of courses reflect the cultural milieu of the student teachers and their future students and to which they develop the skills and understanding necessary for achieving the educational goals of Indian people in B.C.

From this perspective, the Indian Studies courses are most significant in establishing the Indianness of NITEP. When NITEP began the courses were made very flexible so that students could pursue their individual interests using the Coordinator as a resource person. We quickly found that there were serious gaps in the background knowledge of the students, and that the Coordinators simply did not have time to act as a resource person or to prepare a core course to fill in these gaps. The problem was compounded by reducing the teaching hours and credit value of the courses in 1977. (the time gained by the reduction in teaching hours and credit value was assigned to a more academic course dealing with resourceful foundations of education). The result was a very strong "love-hate" attitude towards Indian Studies by the students. Three years ago one faculty member was assigned to revise and teach these courses. This took the pressure off the Coordinators and

provided for the development of a core content in the Indian Studies courses. The result was two carefully developed and sequenced courses. The Indian Studies courses were further enhanced this past year by being taught by a native Indian faculty member. The next goal is to increase the value of the Indian Studies courses in the first and second year to the status of full courses and to add Indian Studies courses to the third and fourth years of studies. This would ensure that by the time the student graduates, almost 20% of his or her course work will have been in Indian Studies.

Another significant component in the Indianness of the native Indian teacher education program is the opportunity for the students to do their student teaching in native Indian communities. The in-term student teaching is usually done in or near the community in which the off-campus Centre is located. Efforts are made to have students placed in a variety of situations including the schools where there is a significant number of native children. The post-term practicums are more frequently carried out in the student's home community or in other native Indian communities. There has been some difficulty over the years in providing appropriate support to the weaker students who are placed in the more isolated communities. We find a constant pressure for logistical reasons to place students in larger communities where there may only be very few native Indian children in attendance.

The Program has also attempted to increase the Indianness of the program of courses by infusing or integrating Indian-related content into all the course work. Until recently this infusion and integration has been up to the individual instructor with encouragement from Program staff.

As a result of suggestions from the NITEP students and the Advisory Committee, the Program will provide an orientation workshop for NITEP instructors which would include a section specifically on helping them to adapt their course content.

Another very imporant way in which the Program attempts to enhance the Indianness is through special events, particularly attendance at Indian conferences and field trips to Indian education projects. These special events have provided the students with extremely valuable information and points of view that they could not encounter in a regular classroom setting. In addition, these special events develop a group cohesiveness, a group spirit, that could not be developed in any other way. Timetabling difficulties in planning for these special events are frequent because the events carry no formal course credit. The temptation is to set them aside in favour of those activities which do carry course credit.

Summation

The Program has had considerable success in maintaining and developing the Indianness of NITEP. A recent graduate put it this way:

"When I was in NITEP I also saw that people who succeeded had a very strong commitment to their Indianness. Those people thought, 'After NITEP I'm going to be able to go home and offer my community something.' I know my pride in my ancestry was a factor in my success in NITEP. I thought, 'What I'm going to do is going to really affect the younger generation.' And

as I mentioned before I think it's a good Program, it's going to make you a success." (Jimmie, 1980, p. 3).

Thomas and McIntosh found that over 70% of the NITEP students felt they were gaining greater insight into traditional Indian life and the values which should be preserved, they were gaining a clearer sense of their roots as native people, and that NITEP had assisted them in coming to grips with personal bad experiences in Indian-non-Indian relationships (Thomas and McIntosh, 1977, p. 58).

To this point this paper has dealt primarily with the past and present of NITEP. What of the future?

At the Workshop in autumn, 1980 Advisory Committee, Staff, students and instructors looked at the past and future of NITEP. Some of the recommendations coming from that workshop include:

1. Increased Indian Studies courses.
2. Increases in Indian Staffing.
3. An increase in student teaching in home communities.
4. Special Indian graduation ceremony in addition to the regular university graduation ceremony.
5. Workshops for instructors for cultural infusion and integration.
6. Increase student representation on the NITEP Advisory Committee.
7. Increased involvement in urban Indian education.

These recommendations are presented to the Symposium as a possible starting point for discussion.

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